

## MEDIA RELEASE

Strictly embargoed  
1201 AM May 10, 2014

### **New Industry Body for Professional Government Relations Practitioners**

A number of longstanding consulting firms and senior practitioners have come together to establish a professional government relations industry association that will promote ethical standards, greater transparency and a binding code of conduct which will apply to all members.

The newly formed Australian Professional Government Relations Association (APGRA) will come into effect from July 1, 2014 and aims to:

- Promote the highest standards of government relations practice in Australia through the establishment and maintenance of a robust industry code of conduct.
- Include an annual accreditation process for all members to ensure maintenance of professional standards.
- Complement existing regulation of government relations activity in Australia and provide a basis for regular dialogue between government and the profession.
- Contribute to greater understanding of professional government relations in Australia, and the legitimate and important role the sector plays.

“For the first time in Australia, this Association will establish and enforce minimum standards for the government relations profession,” APGRA inaugural President Mr Armon Hicks said.

“Being able to make representations to government on behalf of the community or private sector on issues of concern or policy is a fundamental part of our democracy.”

“Government relations professionals play an important role by assisting a range of organisations from industry bodies and corporates through to community and charity groups to undertake this process.”

The centrepiece of the Association is a Code that regulates the conduct of members and promotes the highest ethical standards in the government relations profession. It operates alongside the Australian Government’s Lobbying Code of Conduct, and legislation and codes that exist at state level.

“The combination of existing government regulation and industry self-regulation with an accreditation process will ensure our industry operates within the robust, transparent and professional framework that the community expects and deserves,” Mr Hicks said.

The Code of Conduct, which has been released today (see: <http://www.apgra.com.au/>), will be reviewed and updated as required to ensure that it remains relevant to industry and community expectations.

“Membership of the Association will be open to all practitioners across all categories, including in-house practitioners, provided they are able to satisfy, and commit to, the Association’s Code of Conduct and Membership Rules,” Mr Hicks said

Founding members include Government Relations Australia, Kreab Gavin Anderson, Newgate Communications, Res Publica and Statecraft.

The Association will develop and implement education and induction programs to brief government relations professionals about the Code of Conduct, reinforce expected standards of ethical behaviour and remind practitioners of their professional obligations. These programs will be developed in close consultation with governments and other key stakeholders. It is intended that participation in these programs will become part of the annual member accreditation program.

The Association will also develop an annual outreach program that aims to educate key stakeholders on the role of professional government relations in Australia's democracy.

Ends.

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